

GENERAL NEWS

THE REAL POSTAL SCANDAL.

The Inordinate Price the Government Pays for Transporting the Mails on the Railroads.

In a recent number of the World's Work, M. G. Cuniff points out the real postal scandal in the inordinate price paid by the government for transporting mails. The United States, says he, pays more money every year for the transportation of mail than all the other countries of the world combined. The bulk of this transportation is by railroad, for according to a special weighing of mail by the Postoffice Department in 1898, 85 per cent of all the matter mailed in the country requires railroad carriage, and the proportion is not less abroad. Yet freight and passenger rates are cheaper to private individuals in the United States than in any other country. Why is it, then, that the cost of mail transportation is so high to the United States?

In 1901, according to the last statistics of the International Postal Union, Great Britain, France, and Germany alone—not to speak of the other countries—mailed more than 9,000,000 pieces of matter, as compared with more than 7,000,000 pieces mailed in the United States.

The other countries of the world, omitting Great Britain, had 48,000 miles of post-routes more than we. Great Britain's post-routes added to this total would make the difference even greater. Thus, notwithstanding the cheapness of American railroad rates on other traffic than mail, foreign postoffices, taken all together, handle vastly more mail than ours, send it farther over a greater number of post-routes, and pay less for the service. It cost our government in 1901, in round numbers, \$38,500,000 for railroad transportation alone; the rest of the world for all their domestic transportation, by railroad, by wagon, and by messengers, paid but \$37,000,000—\$1,500,000 less.

The United States Postoffice Department reports a deficit for last year of \$4,000,000. The real deficit is about \$1,000,000 greater, for in the peculiar book-keeping used in recording postal accounts, the salaries of the Postoffice Department, the rent of large city postoffices, and other postal items are not charged as postal expenses. But even at \$4,000,000 the postal deficit is a national disgrace when we consider the inadequacies of the postal service. It is caused in the main by the inordinate railway mail pay.

Besieging Port Arthur.

London, May 17.—The Shanghai correspondent of the Morning Post, cabling under date of May 16, says that, according to a native report from Port Arthur, the Japanese are vigorously besieging the fortress night and day by land and sea, that sixty Japanese warships and transports have been sighted in Blackney Bay, and that heavy firing has been heard in Kin-chou Bay.

JAPANESE CRUISER SUNK.

Struck a Submerged Mine While Clearing Kerr Bay.

Tokyo, May 16.—The Japanese cruiser Miyako was destroyed in Kerr Bay by striking a submerged mine. Eight casualties are reported.

The Miyako was lost while assisting in the operations of clearing the Russian mines from Kerr Bay, northeast of Talien-wan Bay, on which Port Dalny is situated.

The Japanese Legation has received the following cablegram from Tokyo:

"Admiral Kataoka reports that on May 14th our torpedo-boat flotilla continued sea-sweeping operations under cover of the fleet. The enemy constructed temporary batteries on the promontory at Kerr Bay, Talien-wan, mounting six field guns, beside a hastily constructed fort, and with one company of soldiers stubbornly resisted our attack. Our torpedo flotilla, defying the enemy's fire, carried out the operations and destroyed five mines laid by the enemy. Unfortunately one of the mines exploded and sunk our cruiser.

Two Thousand Russians Killed.

London, May 20.—The Standard's correspondent at Tien Tsin cables that while the Japanese fleet was covering the landing of troops near Kai Chau on Monday, a fierce engagement occurred at Hein Yen Cheng. Two thousand Russians were killed or wounded. The Russians retreated and the Japanese occupied both Kai Ping, and Kai Chau. The Chinese governor at Chen Chow has received news, the correspondent adds, that the Russians have destroyed the railway between Taschichiao and New Chwang.

The Abolition of Direct Taxes.

One of the inevitable reforms of the future will be the abolition of direct taxes upon the properties of the peoples of the several States as they arrive at fully settled industrial conditions. New York has already come to the place where only the constitutional tax of thirteen mills is levied for the interest and sinking fund charges on its canal bonds. A constitutional amendment will be adopted in 1905 permitting even those charges to be paid from the general fund and thereafter there will be no direct tax levies in that State. Ohio is now virtually in the same condition, finding its revenues almost entirely in franchise, license and other forms of indirect taxation.

How is it done? By carefully listing the values of all privileges of the people that are used for gain, assessing them according to their ability to divide profits with the State, and thus making incomes—dollars and franchises—and not the laboring, saving, wealth-producing people, pay the State's necessary expenses.

Under this system the man who has worked half a life-time to acquire a \$5,000 farm is not called upon to pay more taxes than a lawyer with a \$10,000 annual income, or the

owner of a building that returns a yearly rental three times larger in money than the farmer's crop. The mechanic who buys a \$200 lot and builds an \$800 home for his family, under the old system, paid taxes on a valuation of his property equal to 75 per centum, at least, of its estimated completed worth to him as a home. Just above him a millionaire, with a home costing \$100,000, would probably pay on a valuation of \$20,000, at the most. All this kind of injustice is done away with by the New York and Ohio system. And it ought to be done away with wherever and to that degree possible.

There are many of our States, of which Georgia is by no means the least, wherein values amounting into hundreds of millions of dollars are escaping taxation altogether, or paying out a tithe of that they should, in which the initiation of this reform is urgently needed. A campaign of popular instruction in the fundamental principles of taxation and demonstration of the righteousness of laying burdens on money rather than on men, women and children, would soon bring an agitation in any State that would not end until this reform should be safely under way. Soon or late it will come, but the sooner the better for just and humane government in the State.—Atlanta Constitution.

Increase in Southern Population.

Superintendent Meriam, of the Census Bureau, in reviewing recently the facts brought out by the census reports, noted the fact that the South has, during the last decade, increased faster in proportion to population than the North, and this in spite of the fact that but little of the immense immigration that has come into the country has drifted south of the Mason and Dixon lines. There has been, however, of late years, a considerable immigration into the South of American people from the North. The South is to-day the best field that the United States opens to the young man of small means and of great energy. This fact is becoming better known, and the tide of inter-State immigration flows that way as it has not before. The birth rate of the South is much higher than the average of the country at large. While it seems that the original New England stock is on the way to extinction, the South is comparatively guiltless of race suicide.—Selected.

One of the Causes of War.

The Yalu timber concession is said to have been one of the principal factors in bringing about the present war. So long as the Russians remained on the western bank of the Yalu the Japanese, though much discontented at the failure to evacuate Manchuria, were not willing to plunge into hostilities, but the procurement by Russia through M. Pavloff, the resident Russian agent and Minister at Seoul, of a large concession of land on the Korean side of the Yalu precipitated the crisis.

The Japanese felt that the alleged

timber concessions was really intended for military purposes and they were confirmed in their suspicion by Russian opposition to the application of Japan, England and the United States to have free ports opened at the mouth of the Yalu River and above at Wiju and Antung.

The practical effect of this decree is to break off all diplomatic relations between Russia and Korea that may have survived the expulsion of M. Pavloff from Seoul and the recall of the Korean Minister from St. Petersburg.

We Do Not Need So Large a Navy as England Has.

Captain Mahan occupies the highest place among naval writers. He is not only the foremost living authority on naval matters; he has superseded other authors and become the weightiest authority, living or dead, on warfare at sea. In England, where the navy is part of the national safety to a degree equalled in no other country, and where, therefore, naval subjects are studied with intensity, any magazine article by Captain Mahan is discussed far and wide, and his books are the basis on which English critics rest. Technical knowledge and large, penetrating insight into the special subject are combined with political wisdom; and his writings are almost as notable for understanding of history as for original and illuminating views of war. His opinions about our need of Hawaii, of an Isthmian canal, or of Porto Rico, are the best that the world affords, and so are his opinions about our need of ships. Captain Mahan's view is that we ought to be reasonably free from attack. He considers not only the enormous difficulty of carrying coal across the ocean, which would give us the advantage over a much stronger navy, but also the complications of European politics, which would make it impossible for any nation safely to send her whole fleet across the Atlantic. He advises only so large a navy as would make us reasonably secure when this vast natural advantage of position is reckoned as one of our safeguards. England is not only cheek by jowl with other great navies: a channel of twenty-one miles divides her from an army of about six hundred thousand men. Yet the President of the United States declares that "we need a navy equal, ship for ship, to the navy of any other nation." Because England, in mortal peril, straining every nerve, must build as many ships as any two warlike powers combined, we must build as many ships as England. It is estimated that it would cost us nearly a thousand million dollars to arrive where Britain is now, to say nothing of extending with her extensions. Even with national calamity a constant menace, the strain of naval expenses often causes grumbling in England. We believe in a navy strong enough to protect our vital interests against any probable danger; but when the situation is discussed by the President as if our dangers and needs were similar to those of England, we are compelled to believe that Mr. Roosevelt is reaching conclusions with his combative temperament and not with his brain; and we may perhaps be allowed to recommend to all, as an antidote to the President's exciting pleas, a careful reading of the writings of that American whose judgment and deep knowledge of the subject have so favorably impressed the world.—Collier's Weekly.